

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LILONG 00644 281421Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 IO-13 /080 W

-----281504Z 028939 /53

O R 281130Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 842

C O N F I D E N T I A L LILONGWE 0644

FOR LOW FROM STEVENSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP

SUBJECT: VISIT TO LUSAKA OF JOHN NGWIRI, SECRETARY TO THE
PRESIDENT AND CABINET

1. NGWIRI ASKED ME TO COME AND SEE HIM THIS MORNING AND
THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO INFORM E THAT HE WILL BE
FLYING TO LUSAKA TODAY TO TALK WITH HIS "VERY OLD AND GOOD
FRIEND MARK CHONA" ABOUT THE SOVIET PRESENCE AND POSSIBLE
THREAT IN THE AREA. HE EXPECTS TO ARRIVE IN LUSAKA AT 5
P.M. TODAY AND WILL BE THERE ALL DAY TOMORROW. HE ASKED
IF I KNEW YOU PERSONALLY AND IF I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE
WILLING TO TALK WITH HIM AFTER HIS VISIT WITH CHONA. I OF
COURSE REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE ON BOTH POINTS AND HE ASKED
THAT YOUR OFFICE GET UN TOUCH WITH THE OFFICE OF THE MALAWIAN
HIGH COMMISSIONER WITH REGARD TO A TIME TOMORROW WHEN HE
MIGHT COME TO SEE YOU.

2. COMMENT: I WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE IF YOU WOULD BE
ABLE TO RECEIVE NGWIRI. HE IS IN A VERY KEY JOB HERE AND
HAS OFTEN ACTED AS A TROUBLE SHOOTER AND SPECIAL EMISSARY FOR
PRESIDENT BANDA. THE FACT THAT HE LASTED FOR EIGHT YEARS AS
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PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND HAS REMAINED
IN HIS PRESENT JOB FOR A YEAR AND A HALF INDICATES THAT HE
IS A PRETTY ADAPTABLE FELLOW TO SAY THE LEAST. BY TRAINING
HE IS A QUANTITY SURVEYOR BUT WENT INTO THE LABOR MOVEMENT
AND AT ONE TIME WORKED FOR THE ILO AS AN ASSISTANT TO HOWARD
ROBINSON WHO NOW IS THE LIAISON OFFICER WITH AF FOR H.

3. FOR SOME MONTHS NOW WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF INCREASING MALAWIAN CONCERN AT THE PROSPECT OF GREATER SOVIET INFLUENCE IN TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA. BANDA'S ANTI-COMMUNISM IS WELL KNOWN AND GOM FEELS, PROBABLY WITH REASON, AN INCREASED SOVIET INFLUENCE MIGHT WELL BRING PRESSURES ON THIS REGIME. NGWIRI SEEMED A BIT AGITATED AND THE APPARENT SUDDENNESS OF THE TRIP MAKES ME THINK BANDA MAY HAVE HEARD SOME RUMOR OF POSSIBLE ANTI-MALAWIAN ACTIVITIES AND WANTS TO ASSURE HIMSELF OF ZAMBIAN SUPPORT SHOULD IT PROVE TRUE. NGWIRI REFERRED TO THE PODGORNYY VISIT AND THE RECENT INVASION IN ZAIRE AND EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT THE US WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ITS TRADITIONAL FRIEND, MALAWI.

4. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO SEE NGWIRI AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND NATURE OF THE CONVERSATION DO NOT MAKE IT SEEM INADVISABLE, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD ASK NGWIRI CASUALLY WHETHER OR NOT THE USIS LIBRARIAN "WHAT IS HIS NAME, OH YES FUNSANI" IS STILL IN DETENTION. YOU MIGHT NOTE YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT HE GOT INTO DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE HE HAD CONTACT WITH A MAN FROM ZAMBIA WHO WAS ATTENDING A REGIONAL ARCHIVIST CONFERENCE IN MANGOCHI. I HAVE TRIED TO IMPRESS MALAWIAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT THE CASE THAT SUCH A DETENTION DOES NOT TAKE PLACE IN A VACUUM BUT THIS IS A VERY INSULAR, INWARD-LOOKING GOVERNMENT AND I THINK YOUR QUESTION MIGHT HELPFULLY JOLT HIM INTO A GREATER AWARENESS THAT OUR CONCERN OVER SUCH ACTION IS NOT JUST A LOCAL MATTER.
STEVENSON

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